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KU Libraries book collecting event to feature distinguished speaker

The University of Kansas Libraries is pleased to announce that Barbara Backus McCorkle will be the keynote speaker at the 51st Annual Snyder Book Collecting Contest on April 27, 2007. The event, which will also feature student awards and a reception, will be held at Oread Books in the Kansas Union. Members of the public are invited to attend, although an RSVP is required. Please contact Rebecca Smith at 785.864.1761 for more information.

McCorkle, a former KU librarian, recently donated to the KU Libraries Department of Special Collections 125 geography texts, gazetteers, and geographical dictionaries that she collected while compiling a carto-bibliography of the maps that such books contain. The gift doubled Spencer Research Library's holdings of geography books published in 18th-century Britain and North America. These geography books, which document the transition of dependence from British to American book and map publishing during the 18th century, strengthens the Spencer Research Library's current collections in geography, exploration and travel, and the history of education.

"It is fitting that Barbara is speaking at this event, as she embodies the ideal and spirit of the Snyder Book Collecting Contest," said Richard Clement, director of special collections at KU Libraries. "She has spent most of her career seeking out and acquiring these significant 18th-century geography texts." McCorkle is well-known as the author of *New England in Early Printed Maps, 1513 to 1800: An Illustrated Carto-bibliography*, published in 2001.

The Snyder contest was created by Elizabeth Morrison Snyder and Robert Vosper, director of KU Libraries, in 1957 as a way of encouraging students to collect books and learn of the pleasure and excitement of having interesting private collections of books at home. The contest encourages students to submit book collections on a specific topic. Entries must include a bibliography of the collection and an essay on the collection's intentions. First, second and honorable mention winners will be awarded cash prizes and KU Bookstores gift cards. The KU Libraries have sponsored the Snyder contest since 1957, with Oread Books in the Kansas Union joining as a co-sponsor in 1974.

McCorkle's keynote address will focus on starting and maintaining book collections. McCorkle earned a Masters of Library Science degree from Emporia State University in 1968, while continuing her education by completing courses in geology, English literature, Russian language and literature, and Polish language at the University of Kansas.

In addition to the position McCorkle held as curator of historical maps at the University of Kansas (1968-1974), she also served as a reference librarian at Purdue University (1976-1979), and then head of the map library at Yale University from 1979 to 1993. In 2000 she was recognized by the Map and Geography Round Table of the American Library Association for outstanding lifetime achievement and major contributions to map librarianship.

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